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1917

Under the Blue and Gold

By

MILDRED E. HUDSON

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UNDER THE BLUE AND GOLD

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MILDRED E. HUDSON

DEDICATION

To Jefferson High School, its past, present and future, and to the teachers and pupils who have walked within its halls, I lovingly dedicate this book.

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JEFFERSON

Where the great Willamette River
Meets Columbia's mighty tide,
Where the sunset's golden glory
Gilds the western countryside,
In a land whose fame and progress
Are a story just begun,
Stands the fairest of all high schools—
'Tis our stately Jefferson.

And to us, her foster children,
Seeking knowledge in her halls,
And preparing for life's conquest,
With its triumphs and its falls,
She's the source of our ambitions,
Of our dreams, our work, our fun—
Inspiration of our frolics
And advancement, Jefferson.

When the years have borne us onward
And we walk in distant ways,
We will still recall the pleasures
Of those far-off youthful days;
Olden parties, skates, and ball-games,
Till our earthly race is done
Will be memories glad and priceless
Of our times at Jefferson.

Where the blue and gold is waving
Its symbolic message high,
There are eighteen hundred students
Held together by one tie;
For the blue shows strength and fairness,
Gold the glory of the sun,
And they both mean youthful progress—
Colors of our Jefferson.

EVERYSTUDENT

Oh, what a life the busy high school student knows!
Four years of pleasure with a lot of grind thrown in,
But it's worth the toil and drill,
For we turn them from the mill
With the faculty of facing every problem with a grin.

First comes the Freshie, just a raw recruit from prep,
Green as they make 'em, and with trousers to the knee;
Then the upper-classmen sneer,
Call him "Baby" and "my dear,"
'Till he learns the ins and outs of all the school from A to Z.

Next year he enters as a tempered sophomore,
Wary of teachers and respectful of his marks;
And he skips his classes, too,
Takes exams. and just gets through,
For at this stage all existence seems a round of merry larks.

Finally he makes the junior class. He gets a girl,
Cultivates a pomp and buys the gaudiest of ties,
Joins a half a dozen teams,
Studies hard and often dreams
Of attaining graduation, a diploma as the prize.

Great is the senior and he loves his dignity;
Stands for his class and all the honor of the school.
He's a model for the rest,
Knows his math. for every test,
And Commencement finds him learned where he used to be a fool.

CAIN

The fire of jealous madness sped his hand,
A new-born hate uprose before his eyes,
He slew in wrath. His terror-stricken cries
Were carried by the very breeze that fanned
The bowers of Eden; and as through the land
He fled, it seemed that even in the skies
The pointed fingers of a thousand spies
Pursued o'er mountain, vale, and scorching sand.

Today we treat with inhumanity
The fellowmen with whom our work is plied,
And from accusing Conscience strive to flee,
And in some soothing project strive to hide.
But neither toil, nor art, nor charity
Can ever quite remove the smart inside.

SCHOOL DAYS

Little flagstone path of mine,
With your dreams and visions fine
And your tangled length of wood and stream and glade,
You have led me through the years,
Tinged like March with wasted tears,
'Till at last I've reached the highway unafraid.

You're the road of school-day life,
Paved with childish trials and strife,
Bordered all along with lessons and with songs;
While with broken flowers and vines
Running wild in matted lines,
You remind me of a thousand by-gone wrongs.

Yes, you're full of sun and rain
And remorse. It's very plain
That the glad and sad ride always side by side.
They've been sifted cunningly
In life's troubled, whirling sea,
And our school days are a prelude to the tide.

MEMORIES

'Tis a little gold locket of workmanship rare
That the friend of my childhood used often to wear—
Just a quaint, shining oval of dainty design,
Whose bright gleam matched the tints of your hair, Mother-mine.
And as I now view it, sweet memories of yore
Come, a troop of dim fancies through Father Time's door;
Thou and I, fragile trinket, are all that remain
To remember my youth with its sunshine and rain.

Lo! I touch a small spring that is hidden away
'Neath the delicate leaves of a tiny rose spray,
And the locket unfolds. To my wondering gaze
Is revealed an old secret; and dreams of lost days
Cast a mist o'er my soul, for a sweet baby face
That is framed in the blue of her sunbonnet's lace
Smiles so trustfully into the future's wide way,
And recalls joyous scenes to a grandmother gray.

This progression of life many scholars extol—
Careless childhood is lost as the years onward roll,
To appear once again ere eternity's gate
Is attained, in the guise of the aged whom Fate
Has here marked to remain, lone, forgotten, and last,
With their lockets and memories and dreams of the past.

THE CALL OF THE SEVEN SEAS*

Soft sighs the wind and the stars gleam with mystery;
Deep and forgotten, the sea croons its song.
Hark! It is telling the ancient world's history,
Speeding with music the still night along.
Oh, it is calling me, voice of eternity,
Showing the earth as a highway for youth,
Making of mankind a seething fraternity,
Traveling up to the summits of truth.

So we must answer the Seven Seas' beckoning,
Follow the trails that our forefathers trod.
This is the law and we must pay the reckoning;
Restless our feet and with dreams they are shod.
Far in the East the old lands are so beautiful,
Hunger and night and the North Lights plead, too,
While to the South and her charms we are dutiful,
Or in the West find our visions come true.

This, then, is why we leave childhood and school behind,
Scattering out through the width of the world;
Wanderlust leads in the passions of life, we find,
After adventure our efforts are hurled.
Comrades of mine, hear the seas calling steadily
Out to careers and ambitions and strife.
Here today, anchored, we're listening readily,
But on the morrow we sail into life!

*To the February, '17, Graduating Class.

THE LAMPLIGHTER

The wind blows wild, the rain comes down,
And all outside is gray.
I hear the beat of people's feet
That hurry up the slippery street
At closing of the day.

But soon there comes a figure bent
And frosty-haired with age.
He stops to light the lamps at night,
When sunny skies have vanished quite—
He seems a kindly sage.

I watch him as he does his work;
Each darkened way he tramps.
When years have flown and I am grown,
I'll tread the avenues alone—
Like him I'll light the lamps.

DAY ON THE BORDER

Morning

O come, thou little pal, with me
To lands along the border far away,
Where mesas rise like isles at sea
And greet the dawning glory of the day.
From barren sands and mesquite tower
These misty pillars clad in glowing light.
With God for one enchanted hour
We see the hidden wonder of His might.

Noon

Come, little pal, the sun rides high.
The mesas are but heaps of southern gold.
They smile in slumber at the sky
And hear the mission bells sublime and old.
The cactus bold defies the heat,
In distant villages adobes gleam,
Among the rocks the lizzards meet;
All things lie down in sweet content to dream.

Night

O little pal, come thou along.
The sun is gone, the moonshine soft and clear,
With weird guitar and peon's song
Is wafted to the silver mesas near.
The shadows lie in velvet pools
Round pepper plant and at the mesa's base.
Ah! here we learn life's vital rules—
With God upon the desert face to face!

AT THE GATES

She stands upon the headland dim and gray,
A figure statue-like amid the gale,
And scans the world's rim for a glimpse of sail,
Unconscious of the wind and dashing spray;
With hope and fear commingled doth she pray.
Her thoughts are on the tempest; tragic, pale,
The watcher seeks through twilight, mist and hail
Her fisher mate across the stormy way.
So do we mortals quaff today's sweet wine
And find the morrow's bitter. Changing things
Make us observant and as life grows old,
Alone upon the shore of passing time,
We meet the thought of death; it somehow brings
Both hope and fear, for death's a tale untold.

PATTY'S HERO

In an old Virginian village
That nestles its domes and towers
'Mongst clustering oaks and lindens
And dreams through the long still hours
Of days of the Revolution,
A mansion forlorn and gray
Stands back from the flagstone highway
Like a ghost of yesterday.
Deserted its halls and garden,
Unkempt are its walks and lawn,
Yet about there seems to linger
Remains of the nation's dawn.

And the tales they tell about it
Are strangely and quaintly old,
Like breaths of the wild syringa
Imprisoned in chests of gold.
But of all the treasured stories
The best, I think, is the one
Which speaks of Patience Wentworth
And her talk with Jefferson.
A maiden demure and charming,
In a gown of blue brocade,
She danced on her thirteenth birthday
With statesmen renowned and staid.

The mansion was brightly lighted;
The ballroom, its master's pride,
Held a throng both large and merry,
Though wild raged the storm outside.
And my stately Mistress Patience
Was treading a measure slow,
When a servant announced a stranger
Come in from the wind and snow.
He entered the massive chamber;
With a grave and kindly air
He bowed to the host and hostess
And the people gathered there.

Then his voice rang clear, "John Wentworth,
Thanks for the aid you lend,
And pardon the mask I wear here;
I am better unknown, my friend."
Then he danced with youthful Patty,
Who thrilled at the mystery,
And he took her in to dinner
Like a maid of high degree.
The child in the brocade satin
Thought her first ball perfect quite
Because of the courtly stranger
Dropped from the mists of the night.

While the guests were making merry,
He whispered gravely and low
Of the country's care and trouble,
And the distance he must go
Ere reaching his destination.
"Ah, my child!" he softly said,
"I must help to build a union
On the work of the nation's dead.
And though I can do but little,
My best will I gladly give
With a hope that we may prosper
And our young republic live."

Thus he talked of truth and justice,
Of honor and liberty,
Till Patty glowed with his fervor
And toasted the brave and free.
And after the feast was ended,
The dancing begun once more,
She wondered about the traveler,
Who stood, black-masked, by the door.
But soon to the host and hostess
He hastily made his way—
The storm had ceased and 'twas urgent
That he be up and away.

So he told them while repeating
His thanks for John Wentworth's aid,
And bowed o'er the slender fingers
Of the girl in blue brocade.
Then galloping through the darkness—
Like a dream on mem'ry's shore—
The hoof-beats ground on the high road,
Grew faint, and were heard no more.
But before the puzzled dancers
Could speak of their doubts or fears,
Another sounding of hoof-beats
Came rapidly to their ears.

A man appeared on the threshold,
Well armed with a sword and gun.
He asked, "Have you seen a rider?
It was Thomas Jefferson!
Papers he bore of importance,
And we fear that some great harm
Has met him upon his journey
To the town from Ashton Farm."
And one in that hall was silent,
Quite dumb with surprise and awe;
For Patty's strangely masked hero
Was master of pen and law!

And this is one of the stories
They tell of old Wentworth Hall,
Beautiful now with its roses
Hung over it like a pall.
And again I see in fancy
In the candelabrum's glow
The wonderful pillared ballroom
And dancers of long ago.
Then into the olden picture,
Fair, stately, and unafraid,
Comes Jefferson's little comrade,
The girl in the blue brocade.

THE EVENING WIND

The sun sinks low behind the western hills,
Bright streamers flame across the dark'ning sky,
the soft gray twilight follows; sweetly clear
I hear the whippoorwills and killdeers cry.
And now the evening wind comes o'er the fields,
And passes through the treetops with a sigh.

O wind, that greet'st me like a wand'ring child
Returning from a trip beyond the sea,
Have you in Bagdad's gardens ever played,
Or roamed among the flocks by Galilee,
Or listened to the shepherds of the South,
And thus brought tales of wonder home to me?

Perhaps you've lingered over Egypt's towers
And whispered to the guardian of the sands,
Received the benediction of the Nile;
Then sped away o'er other foreign lands,
And maybe as your pace grew tired and slow
You marked where Inca's ruined city stands.

Now, laden with the fragrance of the East,
A scent of lotus blooms and orchards fair,
You come to waken subtle memories
Of rambles in the summer evening air.
Dear comrade of my youth, thou evening wind,
Accept my blessing for thy friendship rare.

THE ANCIENT IN NEW YORK

Long years ago a poet, Symonide,
By breathing forth his verses far and wide
In Grecian Doris, prosperous and fair,
Enriched the tranquil, fragrant country air;
And thus became so loved and so revered
That at his death a noble tomb was reared
Above his simple grave. The ages passed
In strife and crumbling silence and at last,
Regardless of the stones above him piled,
The modern man his peaceful rest defiled.

From overseas the vandal spoilers sailed,
And with delight the ruined tomb they hailed.
Ere long the poet's mummified remains
Were taken from their pleasant native lanes
To great New York. Here they were on display
With other curios of yesterday.
But strange to say, the city's atmosphere
Produced in Symonide a change so queer—
The sage revived! With solemn tread and slow,
He left his place and paced the streets below.
And like the petrel lost upon the land,
He found amazing sights on every hand.
"Have I been made immortal?" he exclaimed.
"These people seem Olymp'ans newly named."

Here Hebe dished out waffles, meat, and snails;
There Venus polished manly fingernails;
Apollo drove a yellow jitney car;
And down on Broadway, each a shining star,
The Muses acted on a ten-cent stage—
"Most intellectual beauties of the age,"
The posters read, but Symonide could see
That Heaven was not what it used to be.
Proceeding on, he met Diana fair,
The head of some gay spinsters' club affair.
Sweet Iris, too, he saw within the door
Of Skinum's watered silk and color store;
And stern Minerva, armed with books and rule,
Appeared in state from out the public school.

"Will wonders never cease?" the ancient said,
As Mercury on motorcycle sped
Along the avenue, and Vulcan shod
Fine ladies' steeds and seemed a puny god.
Next Bacchus sauntered from his cool saloon;
Sad Orpheus rehearsed a gentle tune
Upon his old hand-organ; and near by
A fountain nymph sold summer drinks and pie.

This last quite shocked the excavated sage.
"Alas!" he thought. "Jove must be in a rage
To see his followers degraded so;
And as for me, I think I'd better go
To Hades, where I properly belong."
And with a softly-murmured little song,
He stepped into a subway, where a car
Dispatched him to Elysium fields afar.

THE JESTER OF THE KING

He, misshapen little fellow,
In gear of red and yellow,
Danced merrily before his lord the king.
Pale of face and dwarfed of stature,
With a wild and witty nature—
He only lived to caper, joke and sing.
About the court and highways,
Seeming like an elfin boy,
He caroled to the bluebird, wren and lark;
But in rich halls and byways,
In the eveningtide—a toy,
He must amuse his lord an hour ere dark.
Now with story, olden glory,
And a fund of verses rare,
Laughing brightly, tripping lightly,
Doth he banish wrath and care.

But in all his entertaining,
Only one, loud mirth disdaining,
Doth he in secret labor to inspire.
She a princess, graceful, airy,
He a jester, gnome-like fairy—
Between them space from heaven to the mire!
And yet he loves her dearly;
Treasured are her cast-off flowers;
Content to worship dumbly is her knight.
Her marriage morning early,
In the glowing sunrise hours,
Finds him dead within the garden out of sight.
A crumpled pile beside the dial
That marks Time's endless flight;
Loving, loyal, common, royal—
Too low to merit Fortune's fickle smile.

ACROSS THE LAKE

On sunny afternoons when all the world's aglow with light,
And clover scents the air with fragrance sweet,
I take the old canoe and slowly paddle down the lake
To where the water and the marshes meet.

For here the water lilies bloom among their emerald pads,
An iv'ry-tinted throng with hearts of gold,
And here the killdeer twitters through the cattails to his mate,
While snipe and reedbirds whistle, shrill and bold.

And often o'er the swamps there comes the wild loon's lonely call,
Or flash of blue as startled jay skims by;
Then, far across the woodlands through the branches of the trees,
I hear the summer breezes moan and sigh.

Long hours I've spent upon the lake with swaying reeds and ferns
In this still spot, my favorite retreat,
There listening to the songsters of the narrow forest lanes,
Out where the water and the marshes meet.

DUSK

Gently the world's light fades
As bright day passes;
And fields and forest glades
Dusk, like a dream invades,
Dewing the grasses.

Thus in life's sunset glow
Dream we of childhood,
Thinking of long ago
When with the mountain roe
Youth roamed the wildwood.

Twilight is much like age—
Child dreams are over;
And on the long day's page
Youth has become a sage,
Tired as a rover.

THE SPIRIT PROPHECY

In the forests of the western lands beyond the mountains high,
'Neath the mighty oaks and hemlocks stretching up to meet the sky,
Once appeared a child of nature, so the ancient legends say,
Who would come to earth at dawning and at sunset fade away.
Day by day throughout the summer in the woodland's checkered shade
She was seen to dance and frolic, all alone and unafraid;
Till her presence in the country, waking field and glen and lea,
Filled the Indians with wonder at the daily mystery.
Oft about their twilight campfires painted braves old tales would tell,
Weaving in the new narration of the Lady of the Dell.
"She is graceful," they would whisper, "as a sapling in the breeze,
And her hair like straying sunshine flashes forth beneath the trees,
And her garments, richly beaded, are as fine as hilltop haze—
She is surely of the spirits who direct and guide our ways."
So they reasoned and conjectured, till one wiser than the rest
Then suggested that they hasten to this maiden of the West,
Asking her divine intentions and her power upon the land.
So the good advice was heeded and a little chosen band
Walked in silence through the forest, where the sunlight there and here
Showed up streaks of orange and scarlet and proclaimed that fall was near.
Still September's garb was faded—changing—as the warriors bold
Passed along 'neath spreading branches bearing leaves now flecked with gold.
And the wild child, when they found her, seemed an autumn changling, too,
For her robes of fur were ragged and her eyes had lost their blue.
As they hailed her and their questions rang out softly on the air,
Thus she answered in a voice like falling water, rich and rare:
"I am but a summer spirit, and I love the summer world.
From gay June-time till September, with the flowers May winds unfurled,
I can play about thy country, but as late autumnal rains
Greet the winter, I must hasten to ethereal domains.
See the showers of leaves around me, brilliant foes that wish me gone;
Warriors, let this be thy lesson. Ye, too, will be hastened on
In the summer of thy conquests by a greater host than mine;
Mark the story told by Nature—take the warning—it is thine."
Centuries have traveled onward since that maiden's prophecy,
But each Indian remembers and awaits his destiny;
For the spirit's words of warning, ringing down through ages gray,
Find a very near fulfillment in the annals of today.

THE OBSTINATE CHESTNUT BURR

High in the boughs of the chestnut tree
  Swinging so blithely the whole day through,
Little brown babies rocked dreamily,
  Never beholding the sky's clear blue,
Never once feeling the wind's soft breath,
  Locked up tight in their blankets of fur,
Not even knowing of summer's death—
  Those children three in the prickly burr.

So the autumn passed with harvest tunes.
  Winter was due in a week or so;
But the three dreamed on of sunny Junes,
  Forgetting to stretch and drop below.
Nature was worried. "That burr must split,"
  She cried to the bough whereon it clung.
"Tomorrow morning the birds will flit—
  The year's gay music will all be sung."

But the last green burr refused to stir,
  Its sleeping babies refused to wake.
So Nature schemed and because of her
  The babies fell ere the first snowflake.
She told Boy Jack of the chestnut tree
  Out in the woodlands beyond the town;
And his uptossed sticks flew high and free,
  Bringing the babies a-tumbling down.

And that's how the chestnut children came
To lay in the Christmas heart-fire's flame.

TO KAY

I think of him, his youth, his smile, his voice,
Gay with the springtime's promise, never sad,
And thinking of him makes my heart rejoice—
    I term him Kay the Glad.

In noontide dreams I see his lifted face,
Lighted and shy, yet moulded firmly true,
Above a figure full of boyish grace
    As those that Millet drew.

A truly boy, but still a comrade rare,
Follower, followed, both unconsciously
He played with equal skill and manner fair;
    Ah! Kay, remember me!

DESERT TRAGEDY

The sands extend in endless waves of gray,
A shining wilderness beneath the sun,
That sun, the sun of glaring Africa,
Which, burning, pities neither man nor beast.
Away to southward palms against the sky
Proclaim the situation of a spring,
A vale of peace upon the tortured plain;
While eastward rise the features of a sphinx
Half buried by the shifting dunes of time.
Beyond it gleams a skeleton white bleached,
Stretched out in mocking menace, and above
O'er everything, Sahara's sunlight flames.
  Bright sunset! See the wastes in splendor glow—
A sudden intense passion in the West.
Before the lights depart a caravan
Appears in silhouette against the glow
And, bathed in scarlet, climbs the thread-like rim
Of the horizon. Soon the camels swing
Within the shadow of the ancient sphinx;
Beneath its mighty face the Arabs camp.
Confusion follows and then all is still
As Allah, merciful and undefiled,
Receives his threefold bow and evening prayer.
Then silence and a sudden twilight fall
On no man's land.
  Soft night! The wand'rers sleep.
The stars come out and with them does the sphinx
Hold wise communion, for they both have tried
The fruits of knowledge and the ages' creeds.
But gradually the atmosphere grows dense,
A cloudy object hovers o'er the dunes—
The desert's sleepless children watch it come,
And though their lips are closed, their eyes are clear,
So clear the world's vast wisdom's mirrored there.
An instant and the storm of sand is nigh.
It breaks and as a specter of the gloom,
Black, horrible, and formless, sweeping down,
Engulfs the peasants of a happy town,
So it engulfs the dreamers and the tents.
A greater fog than ever London saw
Is whirled and heaved about the stretches gray—
A fog that renders sight impossible.
An hour elapses and the tempest's done;
Tranquility again embraces all;
The peerless woman smiles a stony smile.
  Dawn! O another day dips from the East,
Illuminating into mystery
The country with a painter's gifted touch:
Ethereal and lonely lies it there.

No robe-clad devotee breathes heavenward
Thanks for the morn. No love song, wildly sweet,
Disturbs the solitudes. No camels rise
And sway on south to waiting villages.
Before the sphinx's carven countenance
Is but a heap of smoothly rounded sand,
A tomb around the sleeping caravan
Which, sleeping, shall sleep on forevermore.
Far Said and Cairo shall no more behold
The cavalcade. It stands, an offering
To her who only knows the truth of life.
The noontide enters. Other travelers pass
By sunbaked ways to Biskra and beyond,
But none can know the evil worked between
The eve of one day and another's dawn.

THE PRIVATE FROM GOD-KNOWS-WHERE

Do you know me with your scorning eyes
And sycophant, pious ways?
Do you know me in this strange disguise,
The urchin of other days?
I was the rat of the city streets,
A scavenger of the docks,
And you looked down from the mighty's seats
At the thing upon the rocks.

Today I'm different from other men
As a misfit always is;
And you look from your height again
And God looks down from His.
But where you see the "savage hurled
Away to the front to fight,"
God sees the heart of the underworld
Grow wise in a wondrous light.

Yes, I'm the private from God-Knows-Where,
A man who was born to sin;
And you're the pleader for peace and prayer,
Far from the tumult and din.
You think I'm brainless; you know I'm brave—
You shudder at bloody scenes.
But where you rave to hurry and save,
I know what honor means!

THE ROAD TO YESTERDAY

To distant uplands, dim and misty blue,
Where rustic hamlets rise against the sky,
A road winds, rugged highway, gray with age,
Up from the cities to the hilltops high;
Up from the strife and tumult of the plains
To lonely forests where the breezes sigh.

Beside it vine-hung dwellings, clust'ring, stand,
And still and sunny orchards gayly bloom;
Oft ruined, mossy walls fence in the way,
And stately trees cast on the path their gloom.
Such is the road, a quiet country stretch,
Sweet scented with the meadow's rare perfume.

To those who wander here from foreign climes
'Tis but a common road that winds along;
Yet I behold it fair with memories.
To me it sings a gentle, crooning song
Of simple scenes, beloved in childhood days,
That lie beyond the cities' weary throng.

POMPEII

I walk along each still and narrow street,
Reflecting on this ruined city's past,
And thinking of those sandaled, robe-clad folk
Who gayly trod these stately highways last.

Their massive forum echoes nevermore
The footsteps slow of seekers of the just;
Their baths and temples stand in solitude—
The throng has perished, fallen into dust.

Soft silence clothes their pillared buildings now;
Blue shadows dip the place in mystery;
Far, far to westward gleam with tints of gold
The placid, sunlit waters of the sea.

Majestic, wondrous, are these vast remains,
Their grandeur slowly crumbling to decay;
Prophetic are the courts and ancient homes
That bear the marks of Nature's awful play.

As sunset now spreads over Naples Bay
And kindles sky and plain and mountain-head,
I somehow hear and feel those vanished ones
Who built and loved this city of the dead.

THE DREAMER

You of the gay metropolitan life,
Bred in the blaze of the city's wild strife,
Worshipping fashion and custom and throng,
O, do you think as you hasten along
That, in the progress of these advanced days,
I am a dreamer too strange for your ways?

You live the rush and the roar of the town;
I adore nature from upland to down;
You are content to remain where you are,
I long to follow the course of each star,
Long to forget man's existence and strife
Out where peace fosters an idyllic life.

Weighed with the wanderlust passion, aflame,
I listen—all things of the mist mouth my name;
Breeze of the everglades, flower of the Nile,
Waters of blue lakes that dimple and smile,
Lost, ruined cities, Malay mysteries—
All, all they beckon me over the seas.

Often you wonder why I hate the street
That echoes the treading of myriad feet.
Wonder no more. In the crowd's ceaseless roar
I am a dreamer; the dark deeds of war
Swell but the calls of the wilderness, where
No sounds of battle defile the pure air.

IN THE TROPICS

Far south beyond the torrid line,
And east of Saragasso Sea,
Where sailors with the fever pine
And, tortured, watch the seething brine,
So full of mystery,
An isle of silent, silent wood,
Upheld by coral pillars, stood.
Quite, quite alone upon the watery plain
It faced the puzzling circle of the world;
Man never trod its wild and still domain
And only breakers on its beaches curled.

But high above the reeking, green morasses,
Gray against clouds and strips of bluest arching,
A leaden peak unmarred by dips or passes
Rose from the inland rolls of lava masses
Like some old leader of the Mongols, marching
To unknown wildernesses. Rivers and sedges,
Deep lanes, flower fields, and overhanging ledges
Upturned to gaze in reverence at the peak,
As though its very summit-head could speak
And bid them all in accents grandly clear,
A voice as from a more celestial sphere,
To follow in their master's steps and gladly
Hold up in tribute offerings; not sadly,
But with a joyous pleasure in the giving.
The palm tree nodding to the pool-floored glade
Within the jungles' solitude and shade;
The orchids dripping through the branches, living
Unseen and fragrant; and the deodars,
Drenched by the rain and reaching to the stars—
  All things gave praise unto the mountain,
  Great and small, of every hue;
  E'en the sky within the fountain
  Offered up its steady blue.
No heathen idol ever held such sway
As did the old volcano tall and gray.

A red-hot sunset, amber-glazed,
Played about the eminence,
Bright and smoulderig like a flame;
Often a distant rumbling came—
Words for the scribes below it.
Sudden a flash and crashing!
A bursting of scarlet smoke
Like tropical forest birds dashing
Above all the forest folk.
Then slowly and gently slow
That island green and leader gray,
Clad all in one amazing glow,
With not a wind or skipper's blow,
Slid softly down, and there below,
Tossing waves and veils of spray,
Reposed upon the ocean floor,
A sunken land forevermore,
A sleeper where the fishes play.

IN OLD CAFAY

Under Alabama skies,
Where the burning daylight dies,
And the fragrant dusk appears in gold and gray;
There we walked in yesteryears
By the blue lagoons and meres
Stretching southward in the marshes of Cafay.

Oaks and sycamores and pines,
Great magnolias laced with vines
Shade the waterways whereon we skimmed along;
And each solitary bank
Grown with moss and lilies dank,
Knew our presence as it knew the red bird's song.

O, the marshes of Cafay,
And the merry month of May—
Both have changed and Time has made them somehow sad.
Now I walk these glades alone,
Comrade mine, since you have grown,
Thinking of the hours I spent here as a lad.

Southern twilight finds me still
Listening to the whippoorwill,
And remembering our old idyllic play,
When with ignorance divine,
We together, comrade mine,
Roamed among the sunlit waters of Cafay.

UPLAND SPRING

Softly the twilight falls
O'er tangled woodlands,
And from the thicket walls
Pan with his rabble calls,
"Come to the woodlands!"

Flower people, elves, and sprites
Frolic together,
Led by the fireflies' lights,
Jolly and glad o' nights,
On moorland heather.

That's in the highland spring,
Mystic and haunted,
When woodlands gayly ring,
Hope leaps in everything,
Pan plays, undaunted!

OFF THE REEFS OF TIANILE

Here beneath these Eastern waters, by this sea-girt coral isle,
Lie a thousand vessels wrecked upon the reefs of Tianile—
Works of skill, defense of nations, monuments of toil and art,
Tribute to the great Atlantic, taken to her mighty heart.
Gold the mists that shift among them, strange their comrades of the deep,
Off the reefs so cold and smiling where the fallen squadrons sleep.

Round about them sunken cities rear their silent domes and towers,
And the seaweed and the fishes play among the coral flowers,
And wild caves replete with treasure and a million rainbow lights
Call to mind the age of pirates with its galleons and its fights.
O, but those blue depths are wondrous coffers of a hidden pile—
Yesterday's forgotten grandeur—off the reefs of Tianile!

On the surface still reflections of the palms along the shore
Seem the water's only burdens, but the sea has something more;
For the ships and shadowed castles hold white skeletons of those
Who've dropped off that tropic island where the death-black tempest blows.
O beware, beware the treachery about that tropic isle,
For there's danger lurking always off the reefs of Tianile!

CHRISTMAS

Night was a fathomless bowl
  Over the desert gray,
Where the shifting dune lands roll,
  Pathless and far away,
When up from the moonlit South
  Camels with riders three
Bore homage from Wisdom's mouth
  On to a sapphire sea.
Many a century's sped
  Over that night of old,
Camels and sages are dead,
  Still the story is told.
So here's to it once again—
  That ride beneath the stars—
May it live with earthly men
  Till burst are prison bars,
    And earth gives way,
    And human clay
  Is shorn of all its scars.

THE AURORA BOREALIS

The twilight pall of northern night hangs dark o'er Hudson Bay;
The polar bear and caribou have wandered far away;
The white owl soars above the wastes; the trapper all alone
Stands motionless upon the ice to face the Arctic zone.
His half-breed soul is all afire, his French blood races free—
The wilderness is his to own—he loves its mystery;
And high above the boundless stretch, the silent velvet sky
Regards that solitary speck no bigger than a fly,
Regards the human and his dogs, and with a hiss and roar
Reveals the grandeur of the land from Banks to Labrador;
From earth to zenith rainbow lights that dazzle, flash and gleam,
Combine to form such fabric as is woven in a dream.
Those shooting rays of color mingle, part, and upward flee
In golds and purples, reds and greens, above the sunless sea.
The fields of white reflect their glow, the water paints the sight
That changes night into the day and day into the night.
The trapper breathes in pure delight elixir for his soul;
His creed and gospel does he find within the upturned bowl.
And so he watches till the noise and darkness disappear,
Then forges on through lonely tracts toward Baffin's islands drear.
Not his to question how or why his life is moulded there—
The firmament directs his acts—whatever is, is fair.

MOTHER

In the shadowy hallway, above the wide stair,
Framed in gold-tinted oak, a small picture hangs there;
'Tis a painting of Mother, young, stately and fair.

She is clad in soft satin and lavender lace,
And her dark hair is piled high above a sweet face,
And she carries her fan with a naive girlish grace.

This gay mother of mine with her Irish blue eyes
I can tell of the woods where the silver lake lies,
Of the oriole's nest with its threefold surprise.

One still day when I told her of garden so wild,
Where I play and where she played when she was a child,
She gazed dreamily at me and almost she smiled.

Ofttimes, lonely and tired of the world's vain display,
I retreat to this shrine with the blossoms of May—
To this quaint panel sketch of a fleet yesterday.

THE DEVIL OF SINGALEE

In the isles of the Indian Sea,
Where the trogen in the tree
Sings merrily, fitfully,
And the wild gazelle in jungle and dell
Gallops so fast and free,

There's a spirit of perilous might,
Who toils in the dead o' night,
When the tropic moon hangs white
O'er the swamp lands grey and the jackal's play
And the captured tiger's plight.

Then he labors, the scared natives say,
From dusk till the dawn of day,
Leading the traveler astray
Into bog and stream with his wailing scream
And into the quicksand's way.

And it's many a soul he has led
To the quagmires of the dead
O'er unknown paths that are red;
And the panther's yell and the boa's spell
Are stopped by the demon's tread.

So, my friend, you'll abide here with me;
In the jungle's mystery
The night wind howls in glee.
O'er the noise so wild—hark! you hear a child!
The Devil of Singalee!

THE PURITAN MOTHER

Before the fireplace, in the ruddy glow,
Framed round by shadows of the Long Ago,
A patient mother of the Plymouth band
Sits dreaming of her pleasant native land.
Before her rise the towers of London town;
And from a lofty casement looking down,
She sees again the river winding slow,
The distant hawthorn lanes, the streets below.

The cradle at her side now fades away,
Its precious burden hidden in the gray
Of silver mists that rise o'er hill and lea,
Above the hamlets from the emerald sea—
Old England's scourge, yet to the mother dear;
She views it in the twilight of a year
Made terrible by Poverty's grim breath,
By savage perils, dread disease, and death.

Anon the wand'rer turns to structures high:
Great London's towers that rise against the sky,
The palace fair whence persecution came
And sent the pilgrims to eternal fame.
Rememb'ring then the power that led the way,
And guided through the dangers of each day,
She casts the dreams away without a sigh,
And gently sings her baby's lullaby.

Brave mother of the early colonies,
You left a stately home and crossed the seas
To live in want and ignorance and strife,
To live for freedom and a purer life.
And through your courage and example rare
There rose a mighty nation, cities fair,
And noble men who, free and staunch and true,
Are living altars built to honor you.

TWILIGHT SONG

Little toad on the stepping stones,
  Talking along to the creek;
Solemn teal in the cat-tail swamp,
  Mottled and heavy of beak;
People of wood and field and sand
Call to me o'er the twilight land.

Thus do I love to hear them all—
  Settling down to their sleep:
Meadow folk whisper and crickets sing,
  While the brook in pools so deep
Cuddles the clicking water bugs,
Rustles the reeds the winged fly hugs.

Brother Raincrow on slanting wing
  Dips through the marshes, too;
Thrushes carol a glad good-night
  And the lady-slippers blue
Offer their spikes like Chinese towers
For dancing fireflies' fairy bowers.

Little toad on the stepping stones,
  You and your twilight are dear
To an old, old man whose youth is past
  And whose boyhood you bring near—
Days when I romped like you with June,
Careless of life and its afternoon.

THE FLOWER AND THE EXILE

In Ah Foo's garden wall,
  Mossy and damp and dark,
A creamy petaled flower
  Faces the Chinee park.
The creviced stone, o'erhung
  With trees and gloomy vines,
Presents the waxy cup
  Unmarred by heathen signs.
The only friend I find
  In this strange land of foes,
It breathes a greeting from
  The rock wherein it grows.
Chalice of Christian truth,
  White immortality,
O aid a wayward child
  Far from his "ain countree."
Repeat your nod and smile
  (Ah Foo is sly no more—
He sees but Buddha's form
  Beside the temple door.)
And I will try to learn
  That life still holds some joy
For one alone, forlorn,
  In distant Garry-Foi.

GYPSYING

On to the purple mountains,
  Over the greenwood trail,
Close by the winding river,
  Boasting a misty sail—
So we go ever onward,
  Children of sun and sky,
Wandering carefree gypsies,
  My chosen mate and I.

Dipping into a hollow,
  Climbing a fern-grown ridge,
Greeting our feathered comrades,
  Crossing a rustic bridge—
Thus do we travel onward,
  On to the mountains high,
Hearing the highway's calling,
  My chosen mate and I.

Smiles do we give the sunset,
  Songs do we give the dawn;
Merrily tramp we ever
  O'er forest, field, and lawn—
Thus do we journey onward,
  Seeking the hills that lie
Within the gates of Eden,
  My chosen mate and I.

EVENING MEMORIES

How the sunset o'er the harbor flings out bands of glowing light,
  Like a rosy wine against the western sky;
She was just a little dancer, staunch and true and awful white;
  But I couldn't help her loving me, could I?

See the twilight come a-creeping through the pines and deodars,
  With a sickly, haunting scent of Lotus-flowers;
Yes, I met her while at college in my study of the stars,
  And with her I spent some mighty pleasant hours.

Somewhere in the upland jungles there's a nightingale so free
  That is singing to his mate among the vines;
O her eyes were blue and trusting, always looking up to me,
  But I only laughed and didn't read the signs.

That's the water lapping, lapping on the bleached and level sand:
  All is solitude and moonshine where they meet;
I was just a carefree comrade like the youth of every land
  And I merely thought her babyish and sweet.

Where the velvet shadows deepen round the pines and bungalows—
  Silence—silence—Hell! It's lonely in these glades!
It was joy to hear her laughing as she spun upon her toes;
  My, it's strange how little men folks know of maids!

Tropic night is like a blanket hiding everything away,
  Till the rising moon makes darkness disappear;
'Twas her heart broke when I left her and she waited day by day,
  So she's somewhere in the offing and I'm here.

THE SHEPHERD'S TALE

Where the rolling meadows nestle in the gray Judean hills,
Far away from busy cities and the noisy hum of mills,
Shepherds round a flaming campfire on a still December night
Whispered tales of days forgotten, men immortal, deeds of might.

And at last a youth from Biskra, looking down on Galilee,
Murmured memories of the Southland and Sahara's mystery.
"I could tell a famous story, old as the eternal skies,"
He announces and to questions soft and dreamily replies:

"Yes, I'll tell you of the Master, who was born in yonder town,
And of one who came to worship where the red star gazes down—
Of my tribe was he the father, when from distant Bethlehem
He returned to teach his people by the pyramids of Djram.

"Three wise men across the dunelands journeyed 'neath the astral gleam,
Stopped for water in a palm grove, where beside a moonlit stream
Tents of rovers lay in slumber and the sages waked them not,
Hastening away ere morning and the sands grew deathly hot.

"But a child had heard their voices—Peter of the Thoughtful Eyes—
And he followed them in wonder at the glory of the skies,
Begging leave to gallop with them on to greet the new-born king,
Who in future times should ever make the world with anthems ring.

"Never lad took such a journey as did Peter. Hour on hour
Did they ride ere on their vision burst the first dark mantled tower
Of that town. And there they found Him cradled in the manger's hay;
Peter knelt to worship gladly just as children do today.

" 'Tis the same star shines upon us as surveyed my kinsman then.
As he told the tale I tell it to my nearest fellowmen."
Drowsily his voice dropped lower as his flocks moved restlessly.
Died the fire and nought but starlight showed the nodding devotee.

Bethlehem, the golden city, lies in sleeping silence near,
While the shepherds in the uplands watch the heavens high and clear
For the beacon that tonight glows like a guardian of the skies,
Guiding ever as it guided Peter of the Thoughtful Eyes.

THE CHILDREN'S CRUSADE

I sit before my hearthfire's ruddy light
And fashion from the shadows of the night
Bright visions of those children of the past
Whose actions are in history's pages classed.
And ever do I watch a shining band

That softly marches o'er a twilight land,
Composed of shepherd lads devout of mien,
And white-clad girls courageous and serene;
From every realm they throng, intent to gain
What knights of Christiandom could not retain—
Child-hearts seeking to save
From alien hands a lonely grave,
A distant grave.

Remote and dim they silently go by,
Their eyes uplifted to the summer sky,
Their bare or sandaled feet along the lea
Fast hastening to reach a southern sea.
Such youthful forms, so quaintly robed and fair,
Such baby faces framed in silken hair,
How can thy frail strength crumble might and power
That's ruled the East for many a passing hour?
And yet they travel on, flower-decked, secure,
To meet with faith the Moslem and the Moor.
I see them pass and fade,
Those dreams of the Children's Crusade,
A dream crusade.

AND SO—FAREWELL

The wild wind comes across the hills and whirls along the sunset's rim;
It bears a message vaguely sweet and with a long, long passage dim:
"Come, come to me,
The world's vast sea
Offers fulfillment to your dreams; follow the water's mystic gleams—
Come unto me!"

And so upon the threshhold's edge, dear reader, do we linger here
Until the call of all the wilds and outer lands comes haunting clear
From India and old Japan, from southern isles and tropic calms,
From icy regions of the pine and breathless shores, low-fringed with palms

We hesitate
And pass the gate
Beyond a realm of school-day life into a troubled pool of strife
And alien hate.

And is this, then, the booklet's end, the place where all farewells are said,
The parting of each hearty friend into a land where past is dead?
Nay, fellow-men,
We meet again;
Leaving the world of thus and so, we'll meet, although we cannot know
The why or when.

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